

Greater Grand Rapids Children's Environmental Health Initiative
EPA Region 5 - Chicago

Geographic location or area of activity: Metropolitan Grand Rapids Michigan

Description of activity: Throughout the years EPA Region 5 has collaborated individually with numerous organizations focused on children's health and school environment. In 2006, Region 5 led the development of a geographically focused coalition on Children's Environmental Health (CEH) that engaged partners, established a holistic approach and leveraged existing expertise in the area. EPA's participation in this work has been to connect the groups and helped to create the coalition, but we did not serve as the authority—that is the role of the existing groups in the community.

The CEH initiative serves as an example of successful collaboration that can be transferred to other regions. EPA Region 5 has created an effective model for public/private partnerships which maximizes stakeholder relationships and expertise. This collaboration affirms and supports the specific missions and priorities of each member organization while creating and fostering new opportunities for joint planning, programming and action where common interest or missions exist. The coalition has trained more than 800 education, housing and health professionals, removed over 5500 pounds of outdated chemicals, and increased participation by local and government organizations. EPA's participation in this collaboration is also leading to increased awareness of environmental health by inclusion in local community assessments. By bringing together receptive and specialized community partners, Region 5 has raised consciousness of integrated issues and resources to achieve greater results and improve children's environmental health.

The federal government has supported the Grand Rapids community via a CARE Level II grant, designating the area as a CDC/EPA model collaboration site and by providing a CDC Environmental Health Capacity Building Grant to the Kent County Health Department.

Current Scope of Coalition Work

- Lead Poisoning Prevention.
- Improving school and childcare facility environments.
- Environmental management of asthma triggers.
- Diesel School Bus retrofits/anti-idling campaigns
- Integrated Pest Management.
- Healthy Homes.
- Pollution prevention including hospitals.
- Improving management of chemicals and disposals.

Interagency partners: US EPA, Centers for Disease Control, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Local partners: Kent County Health Department, Environmental Health Services, West Michigan Environmental Action Council, Asthma Network of Western Michigan, Western Michigan Healthy Homes Coalition, over 40 other participating community members and organizations



Members of the Grand Rapids Children's Health Project

Activity URLs CDC Weblink on Kent County Environmental Public Health Capacity Building Grant, http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/CapacityBuilding/Project_Summaries_2007-2010/Michigan.htm; EPA CARE grant Weblink for GGRCEHI CARE grant, <http://www.epa.gov/care/community2007.htm#grandrapidsmj>; EPA/CDC MOU Model Pilot for Collaboration (GGRCEHI), <http://www.epa.gov/care/collaboration.htm> (scroll down the page); Healthy Homes Coalition, <http://www.healthyhomescoalition.org>; West Michigan Environmental Action Council, WMEAC, www.wmeac.org